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~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

June 15, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: John H. Holdridge

SUBJECT: Memorandum to Mr. Helms on SNIE 13-9-70

Al Haig suggested that I do a memorandum from you to Mr. Helms, posing the questions which you raised about the recent SNIE on "Chinese Reactions to Possible Developments in Indochina."

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the memorandum to Mr. Helms at Tab A.

Attachment

NSS/NSC Review Completed.

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JUN 18 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: SNIE 13-9-70 "Chinese Reactions to Possible  
Developments in Indochina"

I have read the SNIE on the Chinese role in Indochina with interest. I thought it was most useful. The paper raised a few questions in my mind about Chinese perspectives.

In paragraph 5, it is argued that Peking is unlikely to change its basic approach, since it would find advantage both in a U.S. withdrawal and in the U.S.'s becoming bogged down in an expanding war. This seems to leave out the possibility that our policies could succeed and that Vietnamization would result in a GVN increasingly able to take care of itself. Is this so totally out of the question as to be left out of Peking's calculation entirely?

Somewhat similarly, in paragraph 12, it is argued that Peking would probably conclude that continued allied military activity in Cambodia did not critically affect the prospects for the Communist struggle in Indochina. The word "critically" provides a certain amount of protection here, but can we really assume that Peking would take such a relaxed and optimistic view?

Again, in paragraph 13, the potential of the Cambodian army, the possible dispatch of U.S. advisory personnel, and increased shipments of U.S. and other arms to Phnom Penh are all very lightly dismissed. Is this the Chinese estimate, or the CIA assessment?

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

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- 2 -

A somewhat different issue arises in paragraph 14. The assumption is made there that the Chinese can at will increase insurgent pressures on the Thai Government. Is this a correct assumption? Should we not rather assume that the insurgents are doing about as well as they can, and that building up pressures from that quarter would be a fairly time-consuming process? My understanding had been that the Thai insurgents increased the pace of their operations too sharply in 1965/66 - perhaps at Chinese bidding - that they suffered the results of their exposure, and that they have been making a sustained effort recently to rebuild their base and to proceed more cautiously.

I should be interested in having comments from your people on these questions.

(Signed) HENRY A. KISSINGER

Henry A. Kissinger

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